

**Sunday February 22, 2026
First Sunday of Lent**

We Gather In God's Presence

Prelude: "Lord, I Want to be A Christian" American Folk Hymn. Arr. Cindy Berry

Birthdays, Celebrations, and Life and Work of the Congregation

Lenten Candle Liturgy:

Why do we put out this candle?

(first purple candle extinguished)

We put out this candle to remind us of every time we give in to those things in life that tempt us. Every time we give in, and seek our own benefit, we ignore that what benefits us may harm another, and we deny God's caring for us. It is a sign that we do not trust God to fulfil God's promises to care for us.

MV 90 "Don't Be Afraid" Words: John L. Bell and Graham Maule, 1995. Music: John L. Bell, 1995
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Don't be afraid. My love is stronger, my love is stronger than your fear.

Don't be afraid. My love is stronger and I have promised, promised to be always near.

Preparing Our Hearts for Worship

Call to Worship

This morning we left the warm comfort of our beds to come here,
called out by the Spirit.

This morning we are given a choice; accept what the world offers,
or reject it, in favour of a different way of life.

This morning we are reminded of the cost of living by God's Word,
and the benefit of the fellowship of the church and of Jesus, our Saviour.

Let us worship the one who calls us to serve by His side.

Hymn VU 108 "Throughout These Lenten Days and Nights" vss. 1-5

Words: James Gertmenian; © 1993 Hope Publishing Co.

Music: Musikalisches Handbuch, Hamburg, 1690.

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Throughout these Lenten days and nights
we turn to walk the inward way,
where, meeting Christ, our guide and light,
we live in hope till Easter Day.

The pilgrim Christ, the Lamb of God,
who found in weakness greater power,
embraces us, though lost and flawed,
and leads us to his Rising Hour.

We bear the silence, cross and pain
of human burdens, human strife,
while sisters, brothers help sustain
our courage till the Feast of Life.

And though the road is hard and steep,
the Spirit ever calls us on
through Calvary's dying, dark and deep,
until we see the coming Dawn.

So let us choose the path of One
who wore, for us, the crown of thorn,
and slept in death that we might wake
to life on Resurrection Morn!

Opening Prayer (*unison*)

Loving God, our shepherd in the wilderness, as we begin this Lenten journey give us the grace to open ourselves to your full care. Overcome our fear of rejection that underlies our deepest desire: to be truly known and loved. Give us strength and wisdom to be good stewards of your creation. When we make decisions regarding the use or disposal of resources, may we consider the future of this world to the seventh generation. Move us by the power of your Holy Spirit. Breathe fresh life into our souls. May we know that you are closer than every breath we take and that your breath not only sustains us but also calls us forward with the strength to walk this Lenten road. Remind us that as we journey with Jesus, we learn the steps of discipleship. As we listen to his call to obedience, may we learn how to say 'no' to all that tempts us. As we witness his suffering, may we live out the good news of the kingdom of God which has come to us through our Lord and Saviour, Jesus, the Anointed One. Amen.

Anthem: "Hymn to Freedom" Words: Harriette Hamilton. Music: Oscar Peterson. Arrangement: Paul Read.

A New Creed VU 918

We are not alone,
we live in God's world.

We believe in God:
who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus,
the Word made flesh,
to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others
by the Spirit.

We trust in God.

We are called to be the Church:
to celebrate God's presence,
to live with respect in Creation,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,
our judge and our hope.

In life, in death, in life beyond death,
God is with us.

We are not alone.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn VU 296 "This Is God's Wondrous World" Words: Malthie Davenport Babcock 1901.

Music: English traditional melody, adapt. Franklin L. Sheppard, 1915, adapt. Stanley Oliver, 1929.

Words, Music, and Adaptations in the Public Domain.

This is God's wondrous world, and to my listening ears
all nature sings, and round me rings the music of the spheres.
This is God's wondrous world; I rest me in the thought
of rocks and trees, of skies and seas, God's hand the wonders wrought.

This is God's wondrous world: the birds their carols raise;
the morning light, the lily white, declare their Maker's praise.
This is God's wondrous world: God shines in all that's fair;
in the rustling grass or mountain pass, God's voice speaks everywhere.

This is God's wondrous world: O let me ne'er forget
that though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the ruler yet.
This is God's wondrous world: why should my heart be sad?
Let voices sing, let the heavens ring: God reigns, let earth be glad!

We Open Ourselves to Receive God's Blessings

Responsive Reading: Psalm 32

Be glad in God, you righteous. Rejoice, O saints, rejoice.

Blessed are those whose offences are forgiven,
whose sin has been put away.

**Blessed are those to whom God imputes no guilt,
and in whose spirit there is no deceit.**

Be glad in God, you righteous. Rejoice, O saints, rejoice.

When I kept silence, my body wasted away,
while I groaned all the day long.

**For your hand was heavy upon me day and night;
my strength dried up as in a summer drought.**

Then I acknowledged my sin to you, my guilt I did not hide.

**I said: 'I will confess my sins to God';
and you forgave the guilt of my sin.**

Therefore let all the faithful pray to you in time of trouble;
when great floodwater rises, it shall not come near them.

You are a hiding place for me,
you will preserve me from trouble;
you will surround me with shouts of deliverance.

Be glad in God, you righteous. Rejoice, O saints, rejoice.

I will teach you, and guide you in the way you should go.

I will keep you under my eye and instruct you.

Be not like a horse or mule, without understanding,
whose course must be checked with bit and bridle.

Many pains are in store for the wicked,
**but whoever trusts in God,
is surrounded by steadfast love.**

Be glad in God, you righteous. Rejoice, O saints, rejoice.

Scripture: Matthew 4:1-11 The Testing of Jesus

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone,

but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.' "

Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,'

and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.' "

Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.' "

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written,

'Worship the Lord your God,
and serve only him.' "

Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

*The other readings for this week are: **Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7; Romans 5:12-19***

Sermon: "Tempted"

Hymn MV 65 “When We Are Tested” Words: Ruth Duck, 1996. Music: Irish traditional melody.
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When we are tested and wrestle alone,
 famished for bread when the world offers stone,
 nourish us, God, by your word and your way,
 food that sustains us by night and by day.

When in the desert we cry for relief,
 pleading for paths marked by certain belief,
 lift us to love you beyond sign and test,
 trusting your presence, our only true rest.

When we are tempted to barter our souls,
 trading the truth for the pow’r to control,
 teach us to worship and praise only you,
 seeking your will in the work that we do.

When we have struggled and searched through the night,
 sorting and sifting the wrong from the right,
 Saviour, surround us with circles of care,
 angels of healing, of hope, and of prayer.

We Respond To God’s Grace

Invitation to Invest in God’s Mission

Extravagant God, like the woman who anointed Jesus’ feet, you lavish us with love and acceptance and ask only that we love and accept others; our neighbours, even our enemies. In offering our gifts, we express our commitment to your way. In offering our gifts, we seek to bring justice, hope and true peace to all peoples. Our tithes and offerings will be received.

Offertory Hymn: VU 129 vs. 5 “Said Judas to Mary” Words and Music: Sydney Carter, 1964.
 Words and Music © 1964, 1969 Hope Publishing Co., Stainer & Bell Ltd.
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“The poor of the world are my body,” he said,
 “to the end of the world they shall be;
 the bread and the blankets you give to the poor
 you’ll know you have given to me,” he said,
 “you’ll know you have given to me.”

Prayer of Dedication

Gracious God, bless and transform all that we offer: our faltering steps, our brokenness, our hope, our risking, our hearts, that your covenant may be written on our hearts and that we may be a blessed and transformed people of your covenant. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession & The Lord's Prayer

Jesus, you refused to turn stones into bread. Save us from using our power, however little, to satisfy the demands of selfishness in the face of the greater needs of others.

Jesus, you refused to leap from the temple top. Save us from displaying our skills, however modest, to win instant popularity in the face of nobler calls on our abilities.

Jesus, you refused to bend your knee to a false god. Save us from offering our devotion, however weak, to cheap or easy religion in the face of the harder path on which you bid us to follow you.

Jesus, you came to serve not only the children of Abraham, but all children of God. This week we pray for the people France, Germany, and Monaco, and for all who face adversity due to disaster, whether of natural or human origin.

Jesus, you came to comfort the bereaved, like the friends and families of Bruce Greeniaus and Joyce Scott. Help us offer comfort to them in your name.

Jesus, you came to heal the sick and dying, like Arnold, Cindy, Gloria, Julie, Rob and their loved ones and caregivers, and those known only in the silence of our hearts.....

Help us to bring them to a place of wholeness in your name.

Jesus, give us wisdom to discern evil; and in the face of all that is deceptively attractive, help us, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to choose the will of God, and so we pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.**

**Thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those**

**who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,
the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

End of Covenant Liturgy

Shannon Wakeling (Chair of the Board)

Our church, like any community, changes.

Babies are born.

Children grow up,

Loved ones and friends grow old.

People move into our community and church.

Others leave us, moving on to new places,
new experiences, and new opportunities.

We remember that the ministry in this place is not entirely our own.

The ministry in this place is Christ's ministry, entrusted to us as part of the Body of Christ. Our ministry belongs to Jesus and is ongoing. When a minister comes into our church, we covenant with one another, and with our Regional Council; we promise to walk together as God's People, deepening our commitment to Jesus Christ and growing closer to God. God's covenant with us never changes, but our covenants with one another do change. We gather now to mark the ending of the covenant between Rev. Mark, Dorchester United Church, and Antler River Watershed Region.

Len Van Harten:

Holy One, we give you thanks for the time and the faith shared in this community of faith. We give you thanks for the faithful ministry of Rev. Mark Perry in our midst. We thank you for the worship, the learning, the service, and the laughter that have been ours together. Be with us now as we mark the end of this relationship, and guide us by your Spirit into the next stage of our life with you. Amen.

Rev. Mark

Friends, you called me into your midst when the only way we could meet was electronically. You called me to serve you in the ministry of word, sacrament, and pastoral care. When we finally covenanted together in person, you presented me with symbols of our ministry together. Now, as we mark the end of that covenant allow me to present some symbols to you.

To Alan Busche

Alan, this Bible is the symbol of the ministry of the Word among us. May God's Word continue to challenge, nurture, and inspire you.

To Ernie Reid

Ernie, this coffee cup is the symbol of your hospitality and life together in community. May you continue to gather around the cup to support one another.

To Brenda Olejnik

Brenda, these bbq tongs are the symbol of your outreach and service to the wider community. May you continue to gather to support neighbours and build community.

To Bob MacMillan

Bob, this Commentary is the symbol of your commitment to learning and growing in Christ. May you continue to learn and grow in your faith, challenge one another, and hold one another accountable for your commitment to ongoing learning.

To Shannon Wakeling

Shannon, these keys are a symbol of our daily duties, the work of administration, and of this building – a witness to Christ's presence in this community. May your light continue to shine in this place.

To the congregation

Members and friends of Dorchester United Church, I thank you for your love, kindness, and support during these past 5 years. I am grateful for the struggles, the surprises, and the opportunities we have shared. I ask you for your forgiveness for the mistakes I have made.

Congregation:

We receive your thankfulness and offer our forgiveness.

We too ask you to forgive our mistakes.

We are grateful for your guidance and your gifts.

As we part, may we know God's grace and peace.

Shannon Wakeling (Chair of the Board)

ARWRC Minister, Congregational Support: Karlene Kimber

(invite congregation to stand, as they are able)

Will you, the members and friends of Dorchester United Church release Mark from the duties of the ministry of word, sacrament, and pastoral care in this place?

Congregation

We will, with God's help.

ARWRC Minister, Congregational Support: Karlene Kimber

Will you respect the new relationship that now begins and offer your encouragement and prayers as he enters retirement and a new stage of his journey with God?

Congregation

We will, with God's help.

ARWRC Minister, Congregational Support: Karlene Kimber

You may be seated.

(invite Rev. Mark to stand)

Will you, Rev. Mark, release Dorchester United Church from their dependence upon you as a minister of word, sacrament, and pastoral care?

Rev. Mark

I will, with God's help.

ARWRC Minister, Congregational Support: Karlene Kimber

Will you respect the new relationship that now begins and offer your encouragement and prayers for their continued ministry in this place?

Rev. Mark

I will, with God's help.

ARWRC Minister, Congregational Support: Karlene Kimber

As a representative of Antler River Watershed Regional Council, also a partner in this covenant, we release Rev. Mark and Dorchester United Church from their covenant, with God's help.

We will remember Rev. Mark and Dorchester United Church in our prayers and support them in their separate ministries as they continue their separate journeys with God.

On behalf of Antler River Watershed Regional Council and the United Church of Canada, I bear witness to the words spoken: words of thankfulness, forgiveness, and release.

Let us pray:

Holy One, your love for all is everlasting.

Help each of us to trust in the future which rests in your care. The time we were together in your name provided laughter and tears, hopes and disappointments. Guide us as we hold on to these cherished memories and move forward in new directions. Keep us one in your love forever, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Hymn VU 641 "Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song" Words & Music © 1961 Les Petites Soeurs de Jesus. English translation © 1970 Stephen Somerville. Harmonized: T. Barrett Armstrong, ca. 1973; © 1995. OneLicense.net A620168

Lord Jesus, you shall be my song as I journey,
I'll tell everybody about you wherever I go:
for our life and our peace and our love is yourself.
Lord Jesus, you shall be my song as I journey.

Lord Jesus, I'll praise you as long as I journey.
May all of my joy be a faithful reflection of you.
May the earth and the sea and the sky join my song.
Lord Jesus, I'll praise you as long as I journey.

As long as I live, Jesus, make me your servant
to carry your cross and to share all your burdens and tears,
for you saved me by giving your body and blood.
As long as I live, Jesus, make me your servant.

I fear in the dark and the doubt of my journey,
but courage will come with the sound of your steps by my side;
and with all of the family you saved by your love,
we'll sing to your dawn at the end of our journey.

Commissioning and Benediction

As you go forth from this place,
may you continue walking with Christ in love and service,
taking with you all that we have learned and shared.
May our memories be springs of water when we are thirsty,
rays of light when we are in darkness,
and reason for rejoicing always.
May God bless and keep us all, this day and always.
Amen.

Sung Response: VU 961 “Let us, O God, Depart In Peace” George Whelpton, in the Public Domain.

Let us, O God, depart in peace,
who in your name are gathered here.
Disclose the brightness of your face,
and be forever near.

Postlude: “O Store Gud. (O Great God). (How Great Thou Art)”

Inspired by Rachmaninoff’s Piano Concerto no. 2, Swedish Folk Melody Arr. Faye Lopez

ANNOUNCEMENTS

February is Black History Month: Here from the Beginning is an exhibition about the history of The United Church of Canada from the perspective of Black peoples in the church. The exhibition will be shown at First – St. Andrew’s United Church in London featuring a performance of the London Kids Community Gospel Choir on February 28 at 6 p.m., followed by a reception. (The exhibition will be open at other times yet to be determined between February 25 and March 4. Exact dates and times TBA. Watch the First – St. Andrew’s website for more information)

Kitchen Conversations with the Moderator is a six part video series this Lent exploring food, faith, and the power of invitation, and is hosted by the Right Rev. Dr. Kimberly Heath. The series debuts with a Shrove Tuesday pancake feast in the Moderator's home kitchen on February 17, with a new episode following each Sunday through Lent, concluding with a special Easter message. Videos will be posted on the United Church of Canada's YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/unitedchurchofcanada>

Lenten Study: As we journey toward Lent, the new Lenten devotional [*Bless, Break, Share: Recipes for Faithful Living*](#) invites you to a spiritual practice of reflecting on food and hunger. What do you hunger for? How do you feed others? What feeds your soul? Whether reflecting individually or in a group, this resource helps us discover how every meal provides an opportunity to grow in faith. To deepen your experience, join Rev. Dr. Christine Jerrett for a six-week [online study on CHURCHx](#), on Tuesdays (2:00–3:00 p.m. ET), beginning February 24, focusing on themes of invitation, justice, and solidarity.

Participants receive a 15% discount on the book, with additional bulk savings available for congregational study groups. [Visit the United Church Bookstore to order your copy](#) or head to [CHURCHx to register for the series](#) today!

The World Day of Prayer service will be held on Friday, March 6 at 2:00 p.m. at St. Peter's Anglican Church. All are welcome.

Lectionary Readings:

Sunday, March 1, Second of Lent

Genesis 12:1-4a; Psalm 121; Romans 4:1-5, 13-17; John 3:1-17 OR Matthew 17:1-9

Sunday, March 8, Third of Lent

Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 95; Romans 5:1-11; John 4:5-42

Sunday, March 15, Fourth of Lent

1 Samuel 16:1-13; Psalm 23; Ephesians 5:8-14; John 9:1-41

Sunday, March 22, Fifth of Lent

Ezekiel 37:1-14; Psalm 130; Romans 8:6-11; John 11:1-45

Sunday, March 29, Palm/Passion Sunday

Palms – Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29; Matthew 21:1-11

Passion – Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 31:9-16; Philippians 2:5-11; Matthew 26:14-27:66 OR Matthew 27:11-54

Maundy Thursday, April 2

Exodus 12:1-4, (5-10), 11-14; Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; John 13:1-17, 31b-35

Good Friday, April 3

Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Psalm 22; Hebrews 10:16-25 OR Hebrews 4:14-16, 5:7-9; John 18:1-19:42

Sunday, April 5, Easter Sunday (First of the season of Easter)

Acts 10:34-43 OR Jeremiah 31:1-6; Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; Colossians 3:1-4 OR Acts 10:34-43; John 20:1-18 OR Matthew 28:1-10